

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 7, 2015

To: Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Jonette N. Arms, Interim Director, Milwaukee County Department on Aging (MCDA)

Re: Informational report in reference to Amendment 1A040 to the County Executive' 2016 Recommended Budget by Supervisors Taylor, Romo West, Mayo, Sr., Moore Omokunde, and Weddle

Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Service Delivery Committee Recommendation: The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Service Delivery Committee is responsible for reviewing proposals for home and community-based service contracts and recommends awards to the Commission on Aging. The committee also conducts assessments of existing service providers on program administration and the quality of programs and services provided. Each year the Service Delivery Committee meets in August to review assessments and in October to review and recommend contract awards for the following year. The Commission on Aging at its November meeting reviews the actions of the Service Delivery Committee and makes contract award recommendations to the Milwaukee County Executive and Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.

At its meeting on October 27, 2015, the Service Delivery Committee recommended not to fund the 2016 proposals for Bethesda Community Senior Citizens' Center/Dining Site and Project Focal Point Senior Center/Dining Site. A letter dated October 29, 2015 from Commissioner Barbara Wyatt Sibley, Chairperson, Service Delivery Committee, explaining the committee's action was sent along with a memo from me as the Interim Director for the Department on Aging to the County Board of Supervisors Finance, Personnel, and Audit Committee on Thursday, October 29, 2015. Refer to Exhibits A and B. While not awarding a full-year contract, the Committee recommended a pro-rated three month contract enabling both agencies to continue providing meals and socially engaging activities for seniors as we inform participants of other senior centers/meal sites, offer them visits to other senior centers/meal sites, and make transportation available as needed.

Also after thoughtful consideration of information relating to their (1) assessment, (2) compliance with program guidelines and specifications, (3) ongoing concerns regarding participant attendance, (4) meal counts, (5) quality of activities provided, (6) outreach and marketing efforts, and (7) outcomes of the Nutrition Revitalization Visioning Session held September 3, 2015. Refer to the Exhibit C., Letters dated October 21, 2015 mailed to agencies to inform them of MCDA recommendation to the Service Delivery Committee based on Exhibit D., Staff Analysis of 2016 Proposals.

Another factor in the decision to not contract with Bethesda Community Senior Citizens' Center and Project Focal Point relates to the high cost of meals. Due to the low number of participants at each site, the costs per meal in 2014 were: \$10.00 at Bethesda Community Senior Citizens' Center and \$8.57 at Project Focal Point, all well above the average cost per meal across all meal sites of \$7.00 in 2014. Eliminating high cost sites when lower cost sites are in close proximity enhances the cost effectiveness of the meal program. Refer to Exhibit E., Page 9 of the Revitalizing Senior the Meal Program report.

Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Decision: Under the authority of Milwaukee County Ordinances – Chapter 53, at the Friday, November 13, 2015 Milwaukee County Commission on Aging meeting, Commission members, at the recommendation of its Service Delivery Committee, voted unanimously to not award a 2016 contract to Bethesda Senior Center/Senior Dining Program for the amount of \$75,000.

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging voted to award Bethesda a three month, \$18,750 contract in 2016 to assist the agency with helping center participants prepare and transition to attend and receive services at an alternative meal site/senior center, if they choose.

Under the authority of Milwaukee County Ordinances – Chapter 53, at the Friday, November 13, 2015 Milwaukee County Commission on Aging meeting, Commission members, at the recommendation of its Service Delivery Committee, voted unanimously to not award a 2016 contract to Project Focal Point Senior Center/Senior Dining Program for the amount of \$60,000.

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging voted to award Project Focal Point a three month, \$15,000 contract in 2016 to assist the agency with helping center participants prepare and transition to attend and receive services at an alternative meal site/senior center, if they choose.

Revitalizing the Senior Meal Program: A report prepared by the Center for Urban Population Health

Aligning with the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, revitalization of the Senior Dining Program is a process that the department has focused on for the past two-years to address economic feasibility and geographic proximity through the assessment of the number of meals served, participant attendance, quality of services provided, safety, ADA accessibility, etc.

In 2014, the Department on Aging contracted with the Center for Urban Population Health provide an evaluation of the senior dining program. Refer to Exhibit E for full report. The program assessment sought answers to the following questions:

- What sites are effective? (In terms of participation, finances, reaching site goals and those in poverty)
- Who lives in the meal site neighborhoods?
- Who attends each meal site?
- Are the sites in the correct place, understanding the trends from the Face of Aging report?
- What is desired by ‘new’ older adults and how can the meal program attract them?

To complete this evaluation, the Center worked with the Department on Aging to create a small advisory group (10 people selected by the Department of Aging as having experience/expertise related to the dining program) to guide and provide input and feedback throughout the process, including:

- Inform recruitment processes
- Inform overall evaluation questions
- Assist with interpreting findings and developing recommendations

The evaluation utilized various sources of data including:

- Meal site participation and donation data
- Census data
- Observations, surveys, and focus groups
- Google maps and the internet

The report provided baseline information on how well the program is achieving its goals through two perspectives. It summarized the individual participants’ opinion regarding why they participate, what enables them to attend and what improvements they would like to see. It accomplishes this through a survey at 24 out of the 28 sites and focus groups at two. It also summarizes meal site specific data on participation, reach into the neighborhood and financial trends.

Recommendations (related to decreasing costs and creating efficiencies):

- Consider funding each site based on participation and average cost per meal versus the flat amount that each site receives.
- Consider adapting contracts to include site specific goals that would need to be reached in order to receive funding. Goals would be focused on improving areas of efficiency or effectiveness. Example areas include participation, cost of meals and participant satisfaction. Goals should be co-created with the site supervisors to ensure success. One place to start is with meal programs who have average meal costs above the average \$7.00; seek ways to work with the sites to reduce their per meal cost.
- Identify opportunities within sub-contract relationships or among sites who have low daily average meals served to share a site supervisor and reduce costs.

As indicated in the report, over the last three years several Senior Meal Program dining sites have seen an increase in participation and number of meals served. Reducing the average cost per meal enables the program to serve more meals to an ever-growing senior population and increase services to those otherwise socially isolated.

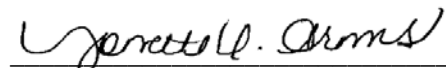
Recent Meal Site Closings

Two congregate meal sites have already closed in 2015 due to low attendance, high average cost per meal, and the availability of other nearby Senior Meal Program dining sites. One additional site will close December 31, 2015. The Department has been able to provide seniors affected by those closures with rides to other sites through its Specialized Elderly Transportation Service.

The dining site at Ascension Lutheran Church, 1236 South Layton Boulevard, closed on February 12, 2015. The cost per meal at Ascension was \$8.39, 19.9% above the program-wide average of \$7.00 per meal. Seniors affected by the closure now attend the dining site at OASIS Senior Center, 2414 West Mitchell Street. The dining site at West Milwaukee Senior Center, 1345 South 47th Street, closed on September 30, 2015. The cost per meal at West Milwaukee was \$10.82, 54.6% above the average per meal cost of \$7.00. Seniors affected by that closure now attend dining sites at West Allis Senior Center, 7001 West National Avenue, or Wilson Park Senior Center, 2601 West Howard Avenue.

Finally, the program's dining site at Lakeside Senior Enrichment Program, 1410 North Prospect Avenue, will close December 31, 2015. The cost per meal at Lakeside is \$9.55 or 36.4% above the program's average of \$7.00 per meal. Senior affected by that closure will have the option of attending dining sites at Arlington Court, 1633 North Arlington Place, or Convent Hill Senior Housing, 455 East Ogden Avenue.

If you have questions, please contact me at 289-6073.



Jonette N. Arms, Interim Director
Milwaukee County Department on Aging

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| cc: | County Executive Chris Abele | Thomas Condella |
| | Raisa Koltun | Mary Proctor Brown |
| | Steve Kreklow | Gary Portenier |
| | Stephen Cady | Patricia Batemon |
| | Janelle Jensen | Beth Monrial-Zatarski |

Enclosures